

Copyright 2008 MediaNews Group, Inc. and Los Angeles Newspaper Group, Inc.
All Rights Reserved
San Gabriel Valley Tribune (California)

April 3, 2008 Thursday

Pasadena offers tax help for free

By Janette Williams, Staff Writer

PASADENA - Demand for help with filing tax returns has spiked so high this year that a second free Tax Preparation Assistance Day has been added for Friday, and another may be scheduled later this month.

Help from certified tax preparers will be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday at Jackie Robinson Center, 1020 N. Fair Oaks Ave., and at Villa-Parke Community Center, 363 E. Villa St.

"The demand was so great and we had such a tremendous response that we scrambled and added the second site," said Councilman Victor Gordo, who is hosting the events. "We're already talking about maybe doing a second one either before April 15 or shortly afterward for people who have filed for an extension."

The reason for this year's record numbers is two-fold, Gordo said: senior citizens who don't normally have to file returns must do so this year if they want the federal tax rebate; and the cost of tax preparation services is too high for low-income filers.

"We started hearing from some constituents that there are more and more tax preparation services taking a bigger and bigger chunk of their refund," Gordo said. "This is an attempt to ensure those who most need it get the services and are able to keep more of their money."

Volunteers have reported a sharp increase in the number of seniors signing up, Gordo said.

"So many seniors don't make enough money to file taxes, but this year they have to file for the rebate," he said. "But the volunteers are prepared to handle the simplest cases, like seniors who just want to ensure the rebate, to more complex cases."

Volunteers are available in English and Spanish, and appointments are suggested for the events, sponsored through a partnership of the California State Controller's Office and the Pasadena Human Services and Recreation Department.

For appointments call (626) 744-4741.

The event is co-sponsored by the California State Controller's Office and the Pasadena Human Services and Recreation Department.

In addition to tax help, information on options and resources for people facing mortgage problems or possible foreclosure will be available from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Villa-Parke Community Center.

This meeting is co-hosted by the Housing and Community Development Division of the City Manager's Department and Pasadena Neighborhood Housing Services.

janette.williams@sgvn.com

(626) 578-6300, Ext. 4482